



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Contact Information

Cheri Smith
1700 N. Congress, Suite 800
Austin, Texas 78711-2277
512-463-4828 / Cell 512-815-9499
Fax 512-475-2395
cheri.smith@tvc.texas.gov

News Release

For Immediate Release: February 6, 2014

Release No. 20140206-01

Texas Veterans Commission recognizes Lt. Gov. Dewhurst

TEXAS – Today, the Texas Veterans Commission will be awarding Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst the Texas Veterans Commission Leadership Award in recognition of his leadership on Veterans' issues as the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Texas.

Lt. Gov. Dewhurst, working with Gov. Rick Perry, and House Speaker Joe Straus directed the Texas Veterans Commission to launch the State Strike Force and the Fully Developed Claims Teams Initiative to help reduce the federal backlog of veterans' claims for disability benefits in July 2012, at a time when the two VA Regional Offices had the third and fourth highest numbers of pending claims in the country.

During the 83rd Legislative Session, Lt. Gov. Dewhurst supported continued funding for the State Strike Force and Fully Developed Claims Teams through 2014 and 2015. Since their creation, the State Strike Force Teams have reviewed over 35,000 cases. Additionally, the Fully Developed Claims Teams have submitted more than 15,700 new claims, which the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs pledged to complete within 90 days.

These combined efforts helped reduce the backlog of federal disability claims in Texas by half, resulting in approximately \$78 million in retroactive payments and \$27 million in new monthly awards to Texas Veterans and their families.

"Ensuring that our Veterans are able to enjoy the very freedoms they've fought to defend is a duty I am committed to upholding," said Dewhurst. "Their sacrifices in the name of this country deserve the reverence and respect of all Texans."

Additionally, as the President of the Texas Senate, legislative actions taken by the 83rd Legislature, including the passage of legislation to ensure the sustainability of the Hazlewood educational benefit for Veterans and their children (SB 1158) and to establish the Veteran Entrepreneur Program (SB 1476), will significantly improve the lives of Texas Veterans, their families, and survivors.

"Lt. Gov. Dewhurst's level of commitment to Veterans' issues has allowed Veterans programs

and services in Texas to set a new standard for the nation” said Thomas Palladino, Executive Director of the Texas Veterans Commission. “Texas isn’t setting the example, we are the example.”

A native Texan and Veteran of the United States Air Force, Dewhurst has served as Lieutenant Governor and President of the Texas Senate since 2003.

Texas Veterans Commission

The mission of the Texas Veterans Commission is to advocate for and provide superior service to Veterans and their families in the areas of disability claims assistance, employment services, education benefits and grant funding. Over 200 skilled counselors in 75 cities provide one-on-one guidance to Veterans and their families to ensure they receive all of the benefits to which they are entitled. For more information about the Texas Veterans Commission services click here: <http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Home.aspx>.

-- ### --